

December 17, 2010

**Questions received re: MARTA COA**

**1. Why does SANBAG/MARTA think ridership is declining so much?**

There are three major issues that we believe are contributing to MARTA's decline in ridership:

**The economy** – The loss of jobs, income, and correspondingly, the need to use public transit more frequently.

**Fare increases** – Although the increases have been relatively small, they have nevertheless made an impact, particularly in our demand response program with senior and disabled customers on fixed incomes.

**Demographic trends** – Although we have little statistical data regarding this, we do have strong indications that people are moving out of the mountain areas in search of better economic conditions.

**2. IS MARTA expecting collateral marketing materials to be developed as part of the marketing plan?**

Yes, we would like the development of these materials to be part of the marketing plan

**3. Which elements, if any, from the 2007 SRTP were implemented?**

**Service recommendations:**

- MARTA has established limited 30 minute headway along Big Bear Blvd. in the Big Bear Lake area on weekdays.
- Service has been eliminated along the backside of Lake Arrowhead in the RIM area.
- Life-line service has been implemented in the Green Valley Lake area.
- On-time performance has been drastically improved in both the RIM and Big Bear Lake areas. In the RIM area, the modification of the fixed route has improved headway and improved on-time performance, although there is still some improvement needed.
- Over the last three years, MARTA's bus fleet has been greatly improved with the acquisition of new vehicles, and this has improved service and vehicle reliability and safety.

**Marketing/Public Information**

- MARTA has updated and printed a new service brochure, as well as improving the distribution of this material in the communities it serves.
- Route names have been renumbered and changed on some routes in accordance with recommendations in the previous COA.

- MARTA's website has been updated and improved to provide information regarding MARTA's services, including fare structure.
- MARTA has been able to improved visibility with some targeted advertising in the printed media and other areas.

#### **Fare Recommendations**

- Farebox recovery rates have improved since a modest fare increase was implemented in March 2010.
- As recommended, boarding fees have been eliminated to lessen confusion regarding fares.
- Fareboxes have been added to MARTA's fleet, although these boxes are low-tech and unable to allow for electronic data reporting and advanced fare media.
- MARTA has updated all written information to reflect current fare structure and policy, including written instructions for drivers.

#### **4. What is the available budget for this project?**

The budget amount available for this project is still being discussed and formulated.

#### **5. It appears it is a plan for 2012 to 2016, so when would a plan need to be completed to impact 2012 decisions?**

Due to the timing of the COA – the plan should cover 2013 - 2017

#### **6. How much information is available in digital format (stop lists, vehicle schedules, etc.)? (Is the data in the Google Transit database updated and accurate?)**

Bus schedules are available on MARTA's website. The Google Transit database and posting was completed earlier in 2010. There have been no service adjustments since then, so the information on Google Transit is accurate.

#### **7. For dial-a-ride service, does MARTA track passenger pick-ups based on type of eligibility?**

No. MARTA's demand response program is based on ADA requirements **and** the distance from a bus stop the customer lives (more than 1/4 mile). In other words, much of the service is provided to the general population.

**8. Does the region's travel demand model address current and projected future travel demand patterns in MARTA's service area including Big Bear and Crestline?**

Yes, SCAG has that information included in their model. The zones are very large, but all of San Bernardino is included.

**9. Can you share any information about recent ridership trends, preferably by service type and route if they are available?**

A study of MARTA ridership over the last eight fiscal years has revealed several trends:

**Big Bear**

**BB DAR** – After a three (3) year decline from 2004-2007, ridership reached a high mark in 08-09 of 12,670 passengers. However, ridership has declined since the fare was increased in March 2010. Ridership for 09-10 was 11,993. This is a loss of 677 riders from high mark in 08-09.

**BB Fixed Route** – 2006-2007 was the high mark at 116,946. Ridership leveled out over the next two years, but has seen a significant decline in the last year. Ridership for 09-10 was 87,902.

However, in 06-07, the Big Bear Express ridership numbers were added into the total ridership amount. When you add the Express ridership, the total ridership for fixed route service for 09-10 is 99,181.

**BB OTM** – When the third run was added in 2008-2009, ridership increased by over 1,600 riders over the previous two years to 8,037. Ridership for 09-10 was 9,793. However, this steady growth has peaked out, and over the last year there has been a decrease in ridership.

**Overall Ridership** – The weak economy and fare increase in 2010 appears to have taken a toll on ridership.

**RIM Area**

**RIM DAR** – After a four (4) year decline from 2003-2007, ridership reached a high mark in 07-08 of 20,817 passengers. There has been a steady decline in ridership since then and this coincides with the start of the recession in 2008. Ridership has risen over the last few months though. Ridership for 09-10 was 15,668. This was a drop of 1,519 riders from the previous year.

**RIM Fixed Route** – There has been steady growth in ridership over the last three years. Since the routing change in February 2009, there has been a dramatic increase in ridership. Ridership for 09-10 was 12,866 and was an increase of 2,274 riders over the previous year. However, the farebox recovery ratio remains less than expected.

**RIM OTM** – 2006-2007 was the high mark at 12,045. There has been a steady decline in ridership over the last three years, independent of the fare increase earlier this year. Ridership for 09-10 was 8,320 which was a decrease of 2,307 riders from the previous year.

**Overall Ridership** – Although overall ridership in the RIM area has declined over the last two years, the fixed route ridership has been steady and rising. .

**10. Has MARTA conducted any recent passenger surveys? Specifically, does it have current information about rider demographics, travel purposes, and origin-destination patterns?**

MARTA has not done an in-house survey in the last few years, but intends to develop a survey instrument that will be distributed in early spring 2011. MARTA does not have current information regarding rider demographics, travel purposes, or origin-destination patterns.